

bringing amendments to the floor. I have no problems with Republicans raising the point of how we can make legislation better. But it's one thing, Mr. Speaker, and Members, when you come to the floor and you're the pot calling the kettle black, it's one thing for that to happen.

And one thing that I do like, Mr. MURPHY, about our 30-Something Working Group is that we're in the business of fact and not fiction, that we're in the business of carrying out the will of the American people, because we stood on this floor some 4, 6 hard years saying that if you give us the opportunity to lead, this is what we will do. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, American people, and those yet unborn will appreciate our efforts.

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So I think it is important. I'm not upset. If someone says, well, Congressman sounds kind of upset, that guy from Miami. I thought he was kind of easy going, you know, folks from Florida get all excited about things, Sunshine State and all. I'm just glad that God provided me an opportunity to stand upright to be on this floor. And folks in the 17th Congressional District in Florida on one Tuesday morning voted for me to be here to be able to state what I'm saying right now. And so this is not propaganda, it's fact.

I want to thank the Speaker for responding to the Republican leadership on this issue. And I want to thank those Republicans that voted on your very good piece of legislation. I'm glad, because I look forward—I actually sent something out to a couple of friends talking about this today, and I think it's important that we do that.

Mr. MURPHY, I want to thank you for your leadership. I'm glad that we have the opportunity to do the things that we have to do. I know the American people are paying attention to what the presidential candidates are saying. I'm hoping that in the President's closing days, that he has an opportunity to sign and be a part of the good legislation that we're trying to pass here. And I want folks to stay engaged.

Before I close on this segment, I just want to say, because I never hit the floor unless I share with the Members what's happening in Iraq right now, that as of today, April 23, 4,046 Americans have died in Iraq; total number of wounded in action and returned to duty is 6,520; and total number of wounded in action not returning to duty is 3,309. Mr. Speaker, I think every day that should be read into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that Members understand their responsibilities and what they have to do.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Well said, Mr. MEEK. And if we can get the legislation that we passed through the House today through the Senate, what will make those numbers even starker is to partner them with the numbers reflecting the millions of dollars that some people out there are making off

this war. Or those numbers of troops that don't come home, or come home with their lives altered permanently, for many of us, I think for all of us, it doesn't seem right that off of that misery someone is making their fortune out there. And that's what the legislation today on the floor sought to do.

Mr. MEEK, you talked about the fact that on a lot of the pieces of legislation that we've been talking about, especially with respect to our efforts here in this New Direction Congress to try to do something about the legacy of rising oil prices that the President has left us, we've had folks on the other side of the aisle join us. I'm just looking at a couple of bills here on our legislation to finally go after these multinational oil cartels that have been price fixing, have been immune from the actions of prosecutors and U.S. courts. Well, we've decided to put them under the jurisdiction of the United States court system and try to go after them for price fixing. And you know what? We did. It looks like we got about 125 Members of the Republican side of the aisle to join us.

When we went after price gougers, we said, let's make it a Federal crime, let's give the Federal Trade Commission the ability to go after those people who would take advantage of rising prices to gouge consumers, to try to get much more than the market would command. We had over 50 Republicans who joined us on that legislation; we wish we had more. We wish we had a greater bipartisan majority for these pieces of legislation that are going forward. But the fact is that we are working together as much as we can. It's not easy to take on these big interests that are making record profits in the oil industry.

The real problem is down the street. The real problem is that we have empowered and entrusted with the reins of the White House and the entire executive branch two oil company executives, two people who made their own fortunes taking profits off of oil prices, taking money out of the pockets of consumers. And those relationships in this administration with the oil industry, I think more so than the relationships that certain Members of this House might have, have really led us to the point where we have trouble advancing good consumer legislation through the full process because the President's threatened vetoes on the anti-oil cartel bill. The President's threatened veto of the price gouging legislation is what holds it up from moving further through the process.

So Mr. MEEK, this is, I think, a building bipartisan majority here in the House. I think we are having some success convincing some of our friends on the other side of the aisle, despite their procedural tricks and maneuvers, that, you know what, these prices don't discriminate based on what party you went down and registered at the town hall and you're getting killed by gas prices and home heating oil prices

whether you're a Republican or whether you're a Democrat. So I think that may account for why we have been able to build some collective support here for these pieces of legislation.

It's really down the road, as you ended your remarks, Mr. MEEK, by suggesting that we've still got time left, right? I mean, everybody's looking at this presidential election saying, you know what, that's where our focus is. Everybody's concerned about this primary and that primary, and the cable news networks don't cover what we do here, they just cover what's said on the campaign trail. Come on, we've got 9 months left of this administration. We've got 9 months more, potentially, of \$3.53 gasoline prices, of similarly high prices to heat your home in the northeast as the winter starts to come around again. We've still got time to do something if we've got a President to come and join us here and make some of the changes we need to make, Mr. MEEK.

There is still time left. We say to our colleagues, don't pay attention to this presidential election at the detriment of the good work that we still can do. Now that the people have got back control of their House, taking it back from the oil companies that have controlled this agenda for so long, we can still make progress. We can still do something about these prices between now and the end of the year, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If I can, Mr. MURPHY, I think it's important, and I'm going to have to come in for a close because I have to run, but I think that it's important, Mr. Speaker and Members, that we look at it for what it is.

I tell you, a friend of mine from Miami always says, "it is what it is," and I always smile when my friend shares that with me. But I can tell you this, you know, here's President Bush walking with the Saudi king in April of 2005 right here, Mr. Speaker. And I want the Members to make sure that they focus in on that, the very meeting that I was talking about. The White House energy plan was submitted, and individuals had a meeting, and here it is. If you look at the future prices with respect to gasoline, they appear to be headed down. This is what Vice President DICK CHENEY said on 5/20/2001. And as you look at this chart, it started getting worse for the American people, Mr. Speaker and Members, and better for the oil companies. Now, I'm not a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory, but I'm just saying that it's important that we pay attention to what people are saying and what they are doing.

I want to get that other chart and just kind of talk about what happened to the American people. Let me tell you something, I have to fill up my tank, too. My constituents are feeling this pinch, too. And I just want to make sure that folks understand that this is serious business. When you have folks on fixed incomes and they're not receiving cost-of-living adjustments or